

The Creek War: Questions of National Security

Unit: The War of 1812

Topic: The Creek War

Class: American History I (10th Grade)

Time Allotted: 90 Minutes

Created by: Ryan Anderson – Secondary Social Science Teacher

Robert Thrower – Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Poarch Band of Creek Indians

Prerequisite Knowledge: Students should have an existing knowledge base that includes:

- The causes of the American declaration of war
- Key events War of 1812 that pertain to America and Britain
- Background of Creek National Council, the actions of Tecumseh, the Creek Civil War, Sam Moniac, William Weatherford, and Andrew Jackson

Persistent Issue: What actions are justified in the sake of national security?

Lesson Focus Question: Were the Americans justified in the actions taken against the Creek Indians?

I. Standards Addressed

1. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1
2. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2
3. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3
4. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6
5. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8
6. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9
7. Alabama Social Studies – 10.6
8. Alabama Social Studies – 10.8

II. Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Point to the key events of the Creek War
2. Criticize and defend American actions against the Creek Indians

III. Materials:

1. Chalkboard/ Chalk or Dry Erase Board/ Markers
2. Perspectives of the Creek War Handouts
3. Perspectives of the Creek War Guiding Questions

IV. Procedure

A. Introduction

1. After strategically arranging students into groups of 2-3 the teacher will begin this lesson by saying “today we will attempt to bring more clarity to an age old question, what actions are justified in the sake of national security. To do this we will delve into an event during and often incorporated in to The War of 1812, The Creek War.”
2. The teacher will then begin a class discussion on national security. During this discussion the teacher should place relatable student answers on the board. This

discussion will begin by establishing what national security is and why it is of such grave importance. From that point the teacher should redirect the discussion by posing the question “what actions might be taken to ensure national security?” Students should provide answers similar to the following: establish laws, decrease privacy/ rights/ freedoms of citizens, war.

3. After students have produced a sufficient amount of methods to ensure national security the teacher should conclude the discussion and begin relating the issue of national security as it pertains to the War of 1812 time period. To do this the teacher should state “that at a time of great international tension and the beginning of westward expansion many Americans feared their national security was threatened by the American Indians. As a result Americans became deeply involved in a civil war between a group of American Indians known as the Creeks.
4. To help better define what actions are appropriate in defense of national security students will read an account of the American-Native American interaction from the perspective of three men (Sam Moniac, William Weatherford, and Andrew Jackson). The men were greatly involved in the Creek War and their accounts will be used to determine if the Americans were justified in the actions taken against the Creek Indians?”
5. The teacher should inform students that after learning more about the opinion of the three sides involved in the Creek War that each student will write two letters to the then President of the United States, James Madison. One of these letters will argue in favor of the American actions against the Native Americans and the other letter will argue in opposition of the actions taken against the American actions taken against the Native Americans

B. Body of the Lesson

1. When beginning the body portion of this lesson the teacher will distribute the “Perspectives of the Creek War” handout and the “Perspective of the Creek War Guiding Questions” handout.
2. Once every student has a copy of each of the two handouts the teacher should instruct the class to individually read the three viewpoints and answer the guiding questions.
3. After the individual reading time is up students should discuss the readings and questions with their partners.
4. Next the teacher should lead a discussion of the perspectives using the guiding questions as discussion questions.

C. Closure

1. At the conclusion of the discussion of the perspectives the teacher should instruct students to now work individually to write two letters to the President of the United States. One of the letters will argue in favor of the American actions against the Native Americans and the other letter will argue in opposition of the American actions taken against the Native Americans. Students should use the perspectives handout and guiding question handout to aid in the writing of the letters.
2. Once each student has written and turned in their letters the teacher should lead a brief discussion using the this time to retell the events that have just been covered and answer any unanswered questions.

Perspectives of the Creek War

WILLIAM “BILLY” WEATHERFORD (RED STICK WARRIOR/LEADER)

My father was a race horse breeder from Scotland. My mother is Sehoy Weatherford, the third descendant by the name Sehoy of the powerful Wind Clan of the Muscogee Creek people. Being of mixed blood, my complexion is lighter than those of my other Creek brothers. Many people do not know I am Creek Indian by looking at my outward appearance. But I was raised in and taught by my mother and her people the traditions and cultures of the Muscogee Creek people. I grew up living in both worlds...the world of the white man and the world of the Creeks.

When the Shawnee Tecumseh spoke at Tuckabatchee town, I must admit that his words stirred my spirit...he was very convincing and much of what he spoke I believe to be the truth. At the same time, I believed that to follow Tecumseh would lead to us all to disaster. As time went by, things grew worse for us and many of my Creek family and friends had chosen to follow Tecumseh and join the Red Stick Movement. When the time to make the decision for me and my people came, I choose the Red Stick side...these are my people...the people of my mother.

What once was simply a disagreement amongst Creeks on how to handle American intrusions escalated to an all-out conflict with the Americans at Burnt Creek. There at Burnt Creek some of our Red Sticks were intercepted and attacked by the Americans. I have heard that my brother-in-law Sam Moniac had something to do with this. The cowards attacked our Red Stick brothers as they were relaxing and eating lunch. Despite the surprise, the Red Sticks prevailed and drove them away. When I learned that Captain Dixon Bailey and his Tensaw Militia had helped attack our people at Burnt Corn.... I decided to convince my people to attack Dixon's residence, a place called Fort Mims. My goal was retaliation for Burnt Corn, to attack and inflict harm upon Dixon's men and the other military there. We attacked at noon, just as they were preparing for lunch...just like Burnt Corn. We were successful, but with time, things got out of hand, and my warriors began to use excessive force on civilians. I tried to stop them but they threatened my life. I left the battle after that. To this day everyone blames me for the massacre of the women and children at Fort Mims.

We will continue to fight the Americans and even our traitorous Creek brothers to the end. If we do not, we will lose everything: our lands, our culture, and in the end, our very lives. We do not own the land...we cannot possess it...we are part of the land, we came from it and shall return back to it. It is better to fight, to die defending our land, than to watch it be slowly and painfully taken away from us. We will fight the Americans and their allies until there is no one left standing to fight. Perhaps the British will intervene and assist us with arms and men. Either way, it is better to die defending our land and our way of life than to see it slowly taken from us.

SAM MONIAC (CREEK NATIONAL COUNCIL / AMERICAN ALLY)

I often think back, just before the conflict within our Nation that led us to this time of terrible division and war, to the days when we called ourselves “the Muscogee”....the “People of One Fire”. Ours was a large and powerful nation that the Europeans feared. We coexisted among with them for over one hundred years. As Muscogee people we were united in our language, our culture, and spirituality.

During the time of trade with the Europeans, we traded deerskins for various material goods. While it was good for us to obtain guns, metal pots and clothing....we were also introduced to something we did not understand...debt. Then came the Americans, though little in number in the beginning, they were more interested in our land...which included the taking of our ancestral lands.

Through marriage to one of my sisters, William Weatherford and I became brother-in-laws. We enjoyed each other's company and worked together on various business ventures. As the pressure to hand over our sacred lands to the Americans increased William and I heard had the opportunity to hear Tecumseh, the Shawnee troublemaker from the north, speak in favor of joining the Red Sticks and violently responding to American encroachment. Though he was powerful and persuasive, both William and I warned everyone that to follow his way would, and resist the Americans, would prove disastrous for our nation. Despite being in agreement then when we had to make the choice...stay friendly or fight against the Americans...I stayed friendly, but much to my surprise, William sided with the Red Sticks.

Sometime later I saw the Red Sticks at Pensacola and reported their presence. This led to the Battle of Burnt Corn. About one month after Burnt Corn, my brother in law, William Weatherford, helped lead the attack on Fort Mims, where many women and children were slaughtered...many of these knew Weatherford personally before the attack. He is now known as the murderer of innocent women and children... my brother-in-law, an enemy of the Americans, is now my enemy.

I am remaining with my Creek brothers who are allies with the Americans. The Red Sticks created what began as a civil war among our nation, they resisted the National Council, and now they must pay the price for resisting the United States of America. National war has come upon them. With time, we shall defeat them and hopefully be able to live at peace among the Americans on our lands and continue our traditional way of life.

ANDREW JACKSON (U.S. MILITARY GENERAL)

Before the brutal massacre of women and children at Fort Mims, I had already warned the Governor of Tennessee that it was time to attack and subdue these savage Red Sticks! I saw that we were headed for disaster and that these Creeks would pose a threat to everyone, if unchecked. This was quiet evident when our native allies, the Creek National Council, invited Americans to intervene on their behalf in the Creek civil war. Then after Fort Mims, I had no problem convincing everyone what needed to be done. Can you imagine if the British begin to support the Red Sticks? Then nothing will stop them, the slaves here will revolt and join with them, and all our frontier families will be subject to their cruelties. My troops have become “engines of destruction” and they are constantly reminded to “Remember Fort Mims” as they approach the battlefield against the Red Sticks. Our goal is the complete destruction of the enemy...and for those who may survive; we make them bleed so that they may come to their senses. They have brought this upon themselves by the slaughter of the innocents! The blood of our children and mothers cry out to Americans from the ground for justice, and this we shall accomplish by the help of Divine Providence!

Perspectives of the Creek War Guiding Questions

William Weatherford's Perspective

1. Upon making his final decision, which side did William Weatherford side with and why?

2. Describe the events of Burnt Corn and the effect that they had?

3. Why did the Red Sticks attack Fort Mims?

4. Summarize the events of the Red Stick attack at Fort Mims.

5. What reasons did William Weatherford present for continuing to fight with the Red Sticks?

Sam Moniac's Perspective

1. Compare the intentions for Native Americans of the European nations and the Americans.

2. Describe Sam Moniac's opinion of Tecumseh and his plans for handling American encroachment.

3. Upon making his final decision, how did Sam Moniac chose to react to American encroachment?

4. Why did Sam Moniac dislike the Red Sticks?

5. How did Sam Moniac believe the Red Sticks should be handled?

Andrew Jackson's Perspective

1. How did Andrew Jackson, and later many Americans, see the Red Sticks?

2. What evidence can be gathered from Jackson's perspective to justify the American actions taken against the Native Americans?

Perspectives of the Creek War Guiding Questions - Answers

William Weatherford's Perspective

1. Upon making his final decision, which side did William Weatherford side with and why?
 - The Red Sticks
 - They were the people of his mother
2. Describe the events of Burnt Corn and the effect that they had?
 - Americans intercepted and attacked Red Sticks while they were preparing lunch; the Red Sticks prevailed
 - It transformed what was previously a disagreement amongst Creeks on how to handle American intrusions into an all-out conflict with the Americans.
3. Why did the Red Sticks attack Fort Mims?
 - They were seeking retaliation for the attack at Burnt Corn
4. Summarize the events of the Red Stick attack at Fort Mims.
 - The Red Sticks launched their attack on the fort at lunch with great success. The attack soon escalated to a level of brutality beyond the original intent.
5. What reasons did William Weatherford present for continuing to fight with the Red Sticks?
 - To protect their lands, culture, and their very lives
 - Fighting for what is so important to them is the only honorable option

Sam Moniac's Perspective

1. Compare the intentions for Native Americans of the European nations and the Americans.
 - The European nations were primarily focused on developing trade relations with the Native Americans while the Americans were more interested in settling their land.
2. Describe Sam Moniac's opinion of Tecumseh and his plans for handling American encroachment.
 - Moniac viewed Tecumseh as a troublemaker
 - Moniac saw that violently resisting the Americans would be disastrous for their people
3. Upon making his final decision, how did Sam Moniac choose to react to American encroachment?
 - He chose to remain friendly to the Americans and the natives who have allied with the Americans
4. Why did Sam Moniac dislike the Red Sticks?
 - He blamed the Red Sticks for the Creek Civil War.
5. How did Sam Moniac believe the Red Sticks should be handled?
 - He thought that they should be defeated to pay for bringing an end to peace.

Andrew Jackson's Perspective

1. How did Andrew Jackson, and later many Americans, see the Red Sticks?
 - They saw them as savages
2. What evidence can be gathered from Jackson's perspective to justify the American actions taken against the Native Americans?
 - They were invited to take action against the Native Americans
 - The Native Americans brutal massacre of women and children at Fort Mims
 - The lack of a quick and strong American response could allow the British to intervene which could lead to a slave revolt and turmoil in the American agricultural economy.

Works Cited

Source for “Creek War Perspectives”: Robert G. Thrower

Robert G. Thrower is the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) and historian for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in Alabama. Robert is a Tribal Member of the Poarch Creeks and a direct descendant of Sehoy of the Wind Clan of the Upper Creeks of Alabama. Samuel Moniac is his seventh great grandfather and William Weatherford is his seventh great uncle. The “Creek War Perspectives” document was prepared by: Robert Thrower on June 4, 2015.